

May 3, 2001

Dear Conference Call Participants,

Thank you for participating in the National Conference Call to Discuss the Evaluation of Interagency Environmental Justice Projects on Wednesday, April 4, 2001. You provided many valuable comments and suggestions, and we consider the conference call to be a great success. We certainly appreciate your participation and enthusiasm.

We have reviewed all points raised during the conference call and have made several decisions on how best to incorporate your feedback. We found that the points of concern could be grouped into four main categories: 1) clarifying evaluation goals; 2) determining project “success”; 3) defining the audience for the report; and 4) selecting a greater number of projects to be part of the evaluation.

Regarding the first point, we have expanded the focus of our goals. Originally we indicated that our major goal for the evaluation was to develop a deeper understanding of what factors significantly contribute to project success. We now additionally see the purpose of this effort to determine the effectiveness of the federal interagency approach and multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships as tools for addressing issues of environmental justice.

On the second point, we plan to emphasize stakeholders’ own perspectives regarding project success as part of an overall description of the successes and challenges experienced by each project.

Regarding possible audiences, you made it very clear that there are many groups that will be interested in the results of this report. Recognizing this, we feel that it is best to consider the members of the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) and the IWG project participants as our primary audience. However, we plan to design different chapters with different audiences in mind. So for example, whereas one chapter will focus on the effectiveness of the federal agencies as participants in these projects, a second chapter will focus on the effectiveness of using a multi-stakeholder, collaborative approach to address environmental justice, irrespective of federal agency participation, emphasizing all groups serving as project partners.

Finally, in terms of the number of projects to be selected for evaluation, we understand the need to include as many projects as possible to better ensure the relevance of the findings. However, due to the lack of resources and, given the fact that this first round of evaluations will be “an evaluation of the evaluation process” as well as an evaluation of the interagency approach, we believe that three to four will be sufficient. We are receptive to including more projects if additional resources become available.

In addition to these main areas, we have modified the guiding principles and begun developing strategies regarding how best to involve project participants in the main stages of the evaluation process based upon your feedback.

For your review we have included the following four items as attachments 1) draft conference call notes; 2) modified guiding principles; 3) revised evaluation methodology; and 4) final list of conference call participants. Please feel free to comment on all these items. **We would appreciate your feedback by COB Friday, May 18.** Send comments to my staff person, Eric Marsh, via email (marsh.eric@epa.gov), fax (202-260-1812) or regular mail (1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, mail code 1807, Washington DC, 20460).

Because of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, we will not be convening another conference call with the same group of participants. However, we will be holding another multi-stakeholder meeting in mid-summer to provide an update of where we are on the evaluation effort and to convey the preliminary results. If you are strongly interested in participating in this event please let us know and we will certainly include you on our next conference call.

Once again, we appreciate your sincere interest in this effort.

Sincerely,

/s/

Katherine A. Dawes, Director  
Evaluation Support Division  
Office of Environmental Policy Innovation  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency